



# MONTANA STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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## 2023 BIENNIUM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### MISSION

The mission of the Office of the State Public Defender (OPD) is to provide effective professional legal services with equal access to quality client-centered representation.

### VISION

As trained legal professionals we strive to represent our clients in an effective and efficient manner to ensure a more fair and balanced justice system. We are dedicated and committed to improving overall outcomes for our clients and addressing the conditions that led to their involvement with the justice system.

### Goal 1

Improve Communications

#### Objectives

- Conduct periodic communication surveys to address gaps
- Identify communication platforms to create efficient and meaningful communication across the agency

### Goal 2

Improve Recruitment and Retention

#### Objectives

- Keep pay matrices current
- Manage the Learning Management System and create a training library
- Improve caseload/workload distribution
- Implement recruitment incentives
- Provide wellness resources

### Goal 3

Improve Agency Operations

#### Objectives

- Implement new case management system
- Continue to automate business processes to increase efficiencies and data integrity
- Track financial and policy impact of new legislation
- Participate in a multi-agency effort to develop a justice information exchange

*We provide effective professional legal services with equal access to quality client-centered representation.*

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES BY PROGRAM**

### **PROGRAM 1, Public Defender Division**

#### **Goal 1.1**

Improve outcomes for parents and children in child welfare cases

##### **Objective**

- Expand holistic representation and create demonstration site(s) with the Family Justice Initiative using IV-E Funds

#### **Goal 1.2**

Evaluate the quality of legal services OPD provides

##### **Objective**

- Develop a meaningful client complaint system

#### **Goal 1.3**

Provide mentorship, training and leadership to lawyers

##### **Objectives**

- Develop lead attorney positions in child welfare, juvenile and involuntary commitment practice areas.
- Continue to develop the field attorney mentoring position and evaluate on a regular basis

### **PROGRAM 2, Appellate Defender Division**

#### **Goal 2.1**

Reduce backlog of assigned cases

##### **Objectives**

- Utilize a mixture of FTE, contract and trial resources
- Share production goals and results

#### **Goal 2.2**

Create efficiencies between FTE and contract attorneys

##### **Objectives**

- Expand case screening procedures
- Track hourly and case weight performance

### **PROGRAM 3, Conflict Defender Division**

#### **Goal 3.1**

Optimize Use of IV-E Money

##### **Objective**

- Develop multi-disciplinary approach to legal representation in dependent neglect cases.

#### **Goal 3.2**

Create efficiencies between FTE and contract attorneys

##### **Objectives**

- Improve supervision of contractors to better control costs.
- Maximize caseloads of FTE and efficient contractors

## PROGRAM 4, Central Services Division

### Goal 4.1

Improve agencywide customer service for employees, clients, and contractors

#### Objectives

- Implement Service Now internal ticketing system
- Assist in identification and implementation of new case management system
- Expand access to case management system through external portal

## PROGRAM 4, Human Resources Division

### Goal 4.2

Create a long-term mentoring program

#### Objectives

- Support the field attorney mentoring pilot project in Program 1
- Evaluate the pilot project and determine sustainability and growth potential

### Goal 4.3

Promote work-life balance

#### Objectives

- Minimize turnover and maintain full staffing
- Work with individual employees to provide appropriate working conditions (telework, part-time work or other solutions) for their unique circumstances
- Analyze data to ensure appropriate caseloads in each division and region